**PLN Strategy 5: Character Traits**

**(Working with fiction)**

**Lesson Focus:** Understanding Characters (character traits)

**PLN piece:** “Story Impression”

Specific character traits of different characters *within the same text* may be difficult for students to identify as they read. Students often relate to one character more than the others and continue to identify with that character throughout the text, without stopping to consider the other characters’ perspectives. Students need to be able to identify different character’s traits while using text examples to support these traits.

Students need to pause while reading and ask themselves, “How would I feel if I were this character?” One way to enable students to put themselves in character’s shoes is to respond in writing; one response should be written from one of the character’s perspective in a situation and then the student should write a response from the other character’s perspective in that same situation.

In order to do this, the students would have to have plenty of practice looking at characters within the same text as they read. This activity would be done after a review of character traits.

**Graphic Organizers:** Story Impression: Student Directions (attached below)

“The Bully” (story attached)

Story Impression Response Sheet (attached below)

Students’ Reading Journals

Model how you would fill in the “Story Impression” sheet using another text example/scene from a story or an example from the novel, Maniac Magee (interactive read aloud).

Then have students write a response based on the story titled, “The Bully”, by Roger Dean Kiser. They must write their perspective from both characters viewpoints in the story.

After they complete this activity, students can continue to apply what they learned about character traits and text support using this same “Story Impression” sheet based on the main characters from their Independent Reading Book they are currently reading in class.

Students can then sit with a partner and explain their perspective of each character by identifying specific character traits and text support for at least two different characters in their Independent Reading Books. This may be extended to a Journal Response.

**Response Sheet: Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Think of the two main characters in the story “The Bully”.**

Think about Tony’s character. Write a paragraph explaining how you would feel if you were Tony. Use at least two examples from the text to support your feelings/opinions. Write a word or two to summarize Tony’s character based on your reading.

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Character Trait(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Think about Roger’s character (the narrator). Write a paragraph explaining how you would feel if you were Roger. Use at least two examples from the text to support your feelings/opinions. Write a word or two to summarize Roger’s character based on your reading.

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Character Trait(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Story Impression**

**Directions:** Write a story using the words below. Please use them in order and think of how they might weave together to tell a story in which you would be the main character. Write a first-person, use quotations properly and have fun!

**The Huddle House Restaurant**

**I**

**“Excuse Me”**

**I**

**Confused**

**I**

**“He knows me.”**

**I**

**Tony the Bull**

**I**

**bully**

**I**

**seventh grade**

**I**

**waved his hand**

**I**

**apologized**

**I**

**wheelchair  
I**

**“I remember”**

**I**

**friend**

*Share your story with your Learning Partner when you finish!*

The Bully

By Roger Dean Kiser

I walked into the Huddle House restaurant in Brunswick, Georgia and sat down at the counter as all of the booths were taken. I picked up a menu and began to look at the various items trying to decide if I wanted to order breakfast or just go ahead and eat lunch.

"Excuse me," said someone, as they touched me on the shoulder.

I looked up and turned to the side to see a rather nice looking woman standing before me.

"ls your name Roger by any chance?" she asked me.

"Yes," I responded, looking rather confused, as I had never seen the woman before.

"My name is Barbara and my husband is Tony," she said, pointing to a distant table near the door leading into the bathrooms.

I looked in the direction that she was pointing but I did not recognize the man who was sitting alone at the table.

"I'm sorry. I'm, ah. I'm, ah, confused. I don't think that I know you guys. But my name is Roger. Roger Kiser," I told her.

"Tony Claxton. Tony from Landon High School in Jacksonville, Florida?" she asked me.

"I'm really sorry. The name doesn't ring a bell," I said.

She turned and walked back to her table and sat down. She and her husband immediately began talking and once in a while I would see her turn around in her seat and look

directly at me.

I finally decided to order breakfast and a cup of decaffeinated coffee. I sat there continually racking my brain trying to remember who this Tony guy was. "I must know him," I thought to myself. "He recognizes me for some reason.”

I picked up my coffee and took a sip. All of a sudden, it came to me like a flash of lightening. "Tony. TONY THE BULL!" I mumbled, as I swung myself around on my stool and faced in his direction. “The bully of my seventh grade geography class," I thought.

How many times that sorry guy had made fun of my big ears in front of the girls in my class? How many times this sorry son-of-a-gun had laughed at me because I had no parents? How many times this big bully slammed me up against the lockers in the hallway just to make himself look like a big man to all the other students?

He raised his hand and waved at me. I forced a smile, returned the wave and turned back around to eat my breakfast.

“Jeez. He's so thin now. Not the big, burly guy that I remember from high school," I thought to myself.

All of a sudden, I heard the sound of dishes breaking. I spun around to see what had happened. Tony had accidentally knocked several plates off the table as he was trying to get into his...wheelchair? I couldn't believe this. It was parked near their table in the bathroom hallway. I hadn't noticed it before. The waitress ran over and started picking up the broken dishes and I listened as Tony and his wife tried to apologize. I couldn't move or stop staring.

As Tony rolled by me, pushed by his wife, he said, "Roger," and nodded his head forward.

"Tony," I responded, as I nodded my head in return.

I watched as they went out of the door and slowly made their way to a large van which had a wheelchair loader located in the side door. I sat watching as his wife tried, over and over, to get the ramp to come down. But it just would not work. Finally, I got up, paid for

my meal, and walked out to the van.

"A problem?” l asked.

"Darn thing sticks once in a while," said Tony.

"Could you help me get him in the van?" asked his wife.

"I think I can do that,” I said as I grabbed the wheelchair and rolled Tony over to the passenger door. I opened the door and locked the brakes on the wheelchair. "OK Arms around the neck, Tony,” I said as I reached down and grabbed him around the waist, carefully raising him into the passenger seat of the van.

"You remember. Don't you?" he said, releasing his hands from my neck and staring directly into my eyes.

"I remember, Tony," I said.

"I guess you're thinking, 'What goes around, comes around'," he said softly.

"I would never think like that, Tony," I said sternly.

He reached over and grabbed both of my hands and squeezed them tightly. “Is how I feel in this wheelchair how you felt way back then when you were in that orphanage?" he asked me.

"Almost, Tony. But you're lucky. You have someone to push you around who loves you. I didn't have anyone," I responded. I reached. in my pocket and pulled out one of my cards that had my home phone number written on it and handed it to him. "Give me a call. We'll do lunch," I told him. We both laughed.

I stood there watching as they drove toward. the interstate and finally disappeared onto the southbound ramp. I hope he calls me sometime. He will be the only friend that I have from my high school days.

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